United States Senate Washington, DC 20510-2004

June 17, 2011

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski Chairman Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations 142 Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison Ranking Member Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations 125 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Mikulski and Ranking Member Hutchison:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and related Agencies with recommendations on how to prioritize programmatic spending for Fiscal Year 2012.

Below I have identified program areas within the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee that are critical to the economic and environmental health and safety of the nation. They are:

COMMERCE

Economic Development Administration

I support the President's FY2012 budget request of \$284 million for Economic Development Assistance Programs as administered by the Economic Development Administration (EDA). This matches the funding provided in the FY2011 CR.

The EDA does incredibly important work to bring jobs and business opportunities to underserved communities around the country. Because these two issues, economic growth and job creation, are top priorities for the American people, adequate funding for the EDA is also a top priority. As the only federal agency focusing solely on promoting private sector job growth in economically underserved communities, EDA pursues regional comprehensive strategy development, public works, and business loans. In doing so, EDA seeks to establish foundations that enable communities to develop their own sustainable economic development initiatives.

SCIENCE

NOAA

NOAA provides critical satellite programs to monitor the Earth's weather and climate and improve forecasting for severe weather events to protect public safety and the economy. It supports fisheries stock assessments and economic development that contributes to sustainable fishing industries and coastal communities. And it advances climate science and services to meet growing demands from the public and private sector for credible and timely products that aid in planning for and responding to climate variability and change. These are critical activities for our economy and for our future. I encourage the Subcommittee to support NOAA's mission through strategic investments. In addition to its support for NOAA's major program activities, I request that the Subcommittee give the following programs special consideration:

Climate Science

I support the President's budget request of \$737 million for research and development related to climate, weather and ecosystem science and for infrastructure to support NOAA's R&D enterprise.

Specifically, I support the FY 2012 budget proposal details for a reorganization to establish a climate service within NOAA. The Administration's reorganization plan is "budget neutral"; it does not change staffing levels, create new facilities or physically relocate any programs or laboratories. The reorganization, however, will help NOAA and the nation better prepare for the inevitable impacts of climate change as well as improve our understanding of the phenomenon itself.

Chesapeake Bay Office

NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office is a division of the National Marine Fisheries' Office of Habitat Conservation, which works to protect and restore coastal and marine habitat at the national level. The Office is also a key collaborator with NOAA's North Atlantic Regional Team, which integrates NOAA's program activities to address priorities at both the national and regional scale. I support the President's funding request for the Office and its affiliated activities, including its work to restore the native oysters to the Chesapeake Bay and its support of effective management of the Blue crab fishery, rockfish, menhaden and other key species.

Education Programs

NOAA B-WET is an environmental education program that promotes locally relevant, experiential learning in the K-12 environment. B-WET currently serves six areas of the country: California, Chesapeake Bay, Gulf of Mexico, Hawai'i, New England, and the Pacific Northwest. Since 2002, NOAA has invested over \$50 million to support more than 600 B-WET projects. The program has undergone rigorous reviews and the conclusions are overwhelmingly positive: students who participate in these programs show significant improvements in not just environmental literacy but also general academic performance.

At the post-secondary level, the NOAA Education Partnership Program with Minority Serving Institutions (EPP/MSI) has a similar record of success. I am a long time supporter of EPP/MSI and in particular, the NOAA Living Marine Resources Cooperative Science Center (LMRCSC) at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES). This rigorous program serves as the nation's primary portal for the training of the next generation of NOAA scientists from minority communities.

I encourage the Subcommittee to support both the B-WET and EPP/MSI programs with the highest possible funding levels.

JUSTICE

Civil Rights Division

I also support full funding of the Administration's request for \$161.8 million for the Civil Rights Division (CRD) of the Department of Justice. CRD will play a critical role in the next fiscal year in combating housing and lending discrimination, guaranteeing voting rights as part of the 2010 Census redistricting, and prosecuting hate crimes using the new authorities under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

If I can provide any further information about these requests that would be helpful to the Subcommittee's deliberations, please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Jodi Schwartz or Mike Burke in my office at 224-4524.

Your attention to these requests is greatly appreciated. I am acutely aware of all of the assistance that you and your staff have provided in the past on requests critical to Maryland and the nation and I look forward to working with you on these priorities for fiscal 2012.

Sincerely,

Benjamin L. Cardin United States Senator